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Grand Prairie Demonstration Project gets state support

MEMPHIS, Tenn. -- March 19, 2001 -- The Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved closer to the construction phase of the water delivery system for the Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project, following a letter of strong support from Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

The Grand Prairie Project will increase irrigation efficiencies and increase storage in on-farm reservoirs, reduce pumping from the alluvial aquifer to a sustainable level, and import water from the White River to fill the on-farm irrigation reservoirs. The project will also greatly increase the acreage of flooded rice fields for waterfowl. Without the project, irrigated agriculture would no longer be possible over the region in the next 15 years with a loss of \$46 million in farm receipts.

In a letter to Memphis District Engineer, Colonel Daniel Krueger, Governor Huckabee wrote "We must act now to preserve the aquifers, to maintain irrigated agriculture, and to increase the waterfowl habitat in the Grand Prairie."

Arkansas' support follows an engineering review of project alternatives by a task force appointed by Huckabee. The task force confirmed the Grand Prairie Demonstration Project was the best way to preserve several resources critical to the state's future.

The engineering task force also determined that the White River is the appropriate source of water for the project, as long as the effects of pumping are monitored, and appropriate measures are taken if impacts are greater than predicted. To learn more about the Grand Prairie Project and the environmental studies, please visit the website -- www.mvm.usace.army.mil/grandprairie/default.asp